

Mesa Police Department, FBI, US Attorney's Office, National Guard, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Public Safety, Arizona Department of Health Services, Maricopa County Department of Health, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Arizona Department of Emergency Management

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Ricin Discovery Prompts Joint Agency Investigation

Federal, state, and local agencies are investigating the discovery of the toxin ricin. A resident of Mesa is being held by authorities as the criminal investigation continues.

The Arizona Department of Health Services and the Maricopa County Department of Public Health emphasize that this incident is not a public health threat, and that there have been no cases of ricin-related illness. Furthermore, there is no evidence of spread of the toxin.

Mesa Police Department and the FBI received information that a single individual was in possession of suspected ricin. The Arizona State Health Laboratory confirmed the specimen tested positive for ricin. The illness caused by ricin cannot be passed from person to person.

At this time, FBI and Mesa Police believe this is an isolated incident with no connections to terrorism.

Law enforcement and public health authorities are working together to monitor the situation closely and local hospitals have been given information.

Information on Ricin and its toxicity can be found on the ADHS web site www.azdhs.gov or the CDC Web site www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/ricin/facts.asp

Members of the public who have questions about ricin may contact the regional poison control centers at 1-800-222-1222.

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